

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel Claims 1-8, 10-17, 19-24, 26 and 27 without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter recited therein.

1 - 24 (Cancelled)

25. (Currently Amended) An image sensing apparatus having image sensing means, comprising:

selection means for manually selecting one of a plurality of image sensing modes for setting quality of an image to be sensed by the image sensing means;

embedding means for embedding information as a watermark in an image;

determination means for automatically determining, in accordance with whether or not the image quality corresponding to the manually selected image sensing mode is lower than a predetermined quality, whether to activate said embedding means; and

control means for, when said determination means determines that the information is to be embedded, performing control to activate said embedding means to embed the information in currently sensed image data obtained by the image sensing means if said determination means determines that the information is to be embedded, and for performing, when said determination means determines that the information is not to be embedded, control to inactivate said embedding means, wherein

said embedding means comprises first embedding means for embedding information as a visible watermark in an image, second embedding means for embedding information as an invisible watermark in an image with priority given to image quality of the image in

which the information is to be embedded, and third embedding means for embedding information as an invisible watermark in an image with priority given to robustness of the information to be embedded, and

    said determination means comprises means for determining one of said first to third embedding means to perform its embedding function when embedding is to be performed.

26 - 33 (Cancelled)

34. (Previously Presented) An image sensing method for use with an apparatus having image sensing means, said method comprising:

    a selection step of manually selecting one of a plurality of image sensing modes for setting quality of an image to be sensed by the image sensing means;

    a determination step of automatically determining, in accordance with whether or not the image quality corresponding to the manually selected image sensing mode is lower than a predetermined quality, whether to activate embedding means for embedding information as a watermark in an image; and

    a control step of, when said determination step determines that embedding is to be executed, performing control to activate the embedding means to embed the watermark in currently sensed image data obtained by the image sensing means, and, when said determination step determines that embedding is not to be executed, performing control to inactivate the embedding means, wherein

    the embedding means comprises first embedding means for embedding information as a visible watermark in an image, second embedding means for embedding information as

an invisible watermark in an image with priority given to image quality of the image in which the information is to be embedded, and third embedding means for embedding information as an invisible watermark in an image with priority given to robustness of the information to be embedded, and

wherein said determination step comprises determining one of said first to third embedding means to perform the embedding function when embedding is to be performed.